

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, April 10. 1711.

TR A D E and War are the Principal Subjects of the Nation's Concern ; I am none of those that would have *the last* Neglected, yet methinks our carrying it on, should not thrust out our Concern for *the first* — Especially if you consider, 1. That one great Reason why we carry on *the last*, is to preserve *the first* ; and 2. One great Means by which we are made able to carry on the *last*, is our Success in *the first* — Trade pays two Thirds of our Taxes, by which War is carried on ; and War is the Defence and Protection under which Trade Flourishes.

'Tis our Trade in many Circumstances, makes the War Necessary, and that Necessity only, makes it just ; What matter'd it to us, who possess'd *Spain*, if the Vent of our Manufactures, on which the Employment and Bread of our Poor depends, did not make it absolutely Necessary, to keep it out of the Hands of *France* ? What signify'd it to us, who and who was together, in the World, if with the Exorbitance of Power, the Ryals and Ballance of Commerce in *Europe* did not lie expos'd ? — And we were not Subject to be Supplanted in our Trade, Navigation, and Vent of our Produce ? —

Let

Let the Duke of *Anjou* and the Arch-Duke of *Austria* fight it out for the *Spanish* Monarchy, or part it between them, *which I believe will at last be the Event of it*—In Honour to the Wisdom and Forecast of *K. William*, whose *Treaty of Partition*, as much as it has been spurn'd at and exploded, *after 8 Years Time, 50 Millions of British Money, and near a Million of Souls lost in the War, we have never yet been able much to mend*—Let them decide their Title, I say, by the *Sword*, or by *Treaty*, it would be all one to us, if our *Commerce*, the *Vital Principle* of our *Prosperity*, were not concern'd in the Quarrel.

Nor was the last *Treaty, which some People are pleas'd was not concluded*, any Thing more or less than a *Treaty of Partition*, after all the stir that has been made about that *Treaty*—And it does not appear to me, that had the King of *France* come in seriously and sincerely, to the *Evacuating of Spain and the Indies*, we should have stood with his Grandson for the *Kingdoms of Sicily and Sardinia*: Indeed I must own, I think, the Case would be hard if we should—*not with France, but with us*; since if it be true, that from the first *Treaty, France* would have quitted all *Spain and the Indies*, upon our *Concession of Naples and Sicily*, then have we carry'd on the War so many Years, and at such vast Expence of Blood and Money, purely for the *Kingdom of Naples*—And whether the Purchase has been worth the Price, I leave it to others to judge.

I know a mighty stir was made, about the *Encrease of the Naval Power of France, by Naples and Sicily, to the Destruction of our Levant Trade*; I know very well where that Argument was first rais'd, and by who, even at *Vienna*, by those who had as much concern for our *Levant Trade*, as we have for the *Muscovites Trade in Palm Oils*—Yet our People espous'd the Notion here, tho' it is known, the whole Kingdom of *Naples and Sicily* never had any Men of War, nor have they one Port where they can lay up a Squadron of Ships if they had them, or well Winter one Man of War.—

But these Things are by story; I believe the *Treaty of Partition*, to the *Immortal Memory of King William*, both as to his Knowledge of, and Concern for the Interest of *England*, will still appear the best Step that *Humane Wisdom* ever did, or ever shall take, to preserve both the *Peace and Commerce of Europe*, whether we look on it as it then was, or as it now is; or whether it respects Matters of *Civil or Religious Interests*, or the *Balance both of Power and of Trade*—And let us make *Peace* when we will, till we can beat the King of *France* out of *Paris*, we shall never mend it—But of this I shall say no more for this Time, for I desire not to meddle with Parties in the Dispute.

The Interest of Trade is what I am upon, in this Paper: I have dwelt long upon it—For the *French Trade* we have a new Act pass'd; I know some People Quarrel it, others say it is *Lame*—For my part, I own, I think it very well to begin with, knowing they that made it, may mend it when they think fit; and there I shall leave it for the present.

I purpos'd to have enter'd into a View of our newly United Trade, I mean of *Scotland*; to whose Commerce, whether Abroad by Export, or at Home by Fishing and Manufacturing, and the several Improvements of both, I have in Design, Dedicated part of this Work, but must adjourn it for the present.

Our *AFRICAN Trade* is the next Article, and this I have dwelt on longer than I intended, urg'd to it by the Preposterous and Absurd Conduct of the People, who oppose the Settlement of that Trade—in which we have seen just what, in my beginning to Discourse of it, I foretold we should meet with, viz. Merchants Petitioning against their Trade, Planters against the Cheapness of *Negroes*, Towns against their Manufactures, and Sailors against the Navigation— I confess I did not think to have met with any Thing so stark Mad, as what I mention'd in my last, of our beloved Friends the Tradesmen of *Wapping and Redriff*—Who being concern'd in Building

ing, Repairing, and Fitting out Ships in the River of *Thames*, humbly Petition the House, that in order to preserve the Trade to the said *River*, therefore other Ports may have Liberty to fit out some of the Ships to *Africa* as well as theirs, which would otherwise fall all to their Share — I gave a little hint at the Fraud of this — To which I need add nothing — The Thing makes a Noise of Petitions in the Bars of the House, and in Clamour it is not always Necessary to have Reason or Truth, so the Noise be but heard; if it don't answer one End, it may another.

But what shall we say to the Trade all this while? And what a Condition is this unhappy Nation in, who between the Contentment of a Company and no Company, are like to lose one of the most Gainful, most Necessary, and most Improveable Trades we are concern'd in, *I mean in its degrees.*

And that I may justify what I say, that we are like to lose it, I shall speak very plain, by Way of Recapitulating the State of the present Debate — The Company lay their Case before the House, and Petition to be settled as a Company; the Separate Traders oppose it with Clamour, and a Noise of Petitioning; What can the House do? If the Company is Establish'd, they, the Separate Men, cry out the Trade is Ruin'd; If these are Establish'd with the Ruin of the Company, we are sure the Trade is lost — What must the House do?

They won't let the House, that is, they would not let the House settle the Company; the House, with submission, never can settle them? What then must be done? — *I speak with respect*, they NEVER CAN, because they cannot Act against common Sense, they cannot Act against the General Interest — The Separate Traders can give no real Security to support the Trade, and the House cannot settle the Trade without it; it would be to throw the Trade away, not to settle it; therefore I presume to say, they never can settle the Separate Traders — If then the Company is not settled,

the Trade is entirely lost — I desire to explain my self.

It is true, the Company, tho' languishing under the Torturing delays of this depending Affair, has hitherto supported their Forts and Castles — What has been the Consequence? under the Cover of those Forts and Castles, the Separate Traders have carried on their Trade, and without it, they won't pretend they could have done it; *Grateful Gentlemen as they are!* Not content with that, they insult the Company, under whose Cover they Trade, and say their Forts and Castles are of no Value; That they Trade but little, and at great Expence, and boast how much Trade others carry on, and how little the Company —

Now if a Man Pleading for the General Interest of Trade, and no Way concern'd in the Particular Interest on one Side or other, may speak freely to his Superiours, I would, with all humble Deference to the House of Commons, move, that these Gentlemen should Answer this Question.

If the Company, destroy'd by the Attacks of these Men, and for want of some Conclusion of this great Debate, should be forc'd, *as they must certainly at last be*, to abandon the Coast of *Africa*, and give up their Forts and Factories there — How would these People, or any Body else, preserve and support the Trade?

While the Company holds their Footing they are the Reason, and they only, why these Men, even while they insult, the Company, can Trade: It is under the Protection of the Company's Forts and Castles, that these come and Rob them, *for I think it is no better*, of their Trade; if the Company had no Forts and Castles, the Separate Traders durst not come upon the Coast, or shew their Faces to the *Negroes*.

Now whereas they boast of their great Share in the Trade, let them tell us how much of that Trade they would carry on, after the Company should forsake the Coast but one half Year?

Would

Would they Land and Build new Forts? Could they Trade then without Forts? — Or would the *Dutch*, who as soon as we were out would immediately *Step in*, give them leave to do either? — And if they could not — Your *Servants*, *Gentlemen Planters*, Will the Separate *Traders* say to their *Barbadoes* *Petitioners*, we can supply you with no more *Negroes*; for the Company has abandon'd their Forts, and the *Dutch* have taken Possession of them, and we can't Trade there — You must now *Petition* the Parliament to give the *Dutch* leave to bring *Negroes* to *Barbadoes*, &c. Nor can any Man blame the *Dutch* neither.

In our last, for *Alc-Ranflat*, read *Alt-Ranflat*.

From this I bring it to a brief Conclusion.

Either the Company can still support themselves, whether they are *Establish'd* or no, which I am very well assured they cannot.

Or the Parliament must this very Session, take that *Affair* into Consideration.

Or the *African Trade* will be entirely lost to this Nation.

I shall Enquire a little farther into Particulars in my next.

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Printed for and sold by John Baker at the Black Boy in Parer-Noster-Row. 1711.